



TIP OF THE SPEAR



- ♠ **Missing SF Soldier awarded posthumous Distinguished Service Cross**
- ♠ **Navy SEAL credits mentor for space mission preparation**
- ♠ **Combat Controller receives two Bronze Stars for combat action**

U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLA., JULY 2009



Green Berets awarded Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Stars ... 16

(From left to right) Sgt. 1st Class Michael Lindsay, Capt. Matthew Chaney, Sgt. 1st Class Jarion Halbisengibbs, Lt. Col. Patrick Roberson, 3rd Battalion, 10th SFG (A) commander, Col. Darsie Rogers Jr., 10th SFG (A) commander, Lt. Gen. John Mulholland Jr., USASOC commander, and Adm. Eric T. Olson, USSOCOM commander, enter the award ceremony at the Special Events Center at Fort Carson, Colo., May 14. Photo by Spc. Henrique de Holleben.

Tip of the Spear

Adm. Eric T. Olson
Commander, USSOCOM

Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Smith
Command Sergeant Major

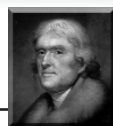
Col. Tim Nye
Public Affairs Director

Mike Bottoms
Managing Editor

Tech. Sgt. Victoria Meyer
NCOIC, Command Information

Master Sgt. Laura LeBeau
Staff Writer

Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Lawn
Staff Photographer



Thomas Jefferson
Award Winner

Best magazine format in DoD 2007 and 2008

This is a U.S. Special Operations Command publication. Contents are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense or USSOCOM. The content is edited, prepared and provided by the USSOCOM Public Affairs Office, 7701 Tampa Point Blvd., MacDill AFB, Fla., 33621, phone (813) 826-4600, DSN 299-4600. An electronic copy can be found at www.socom.mil. E-mail the editor via unclassified network at public.affairs@socom.mil. The editor of the Tip of the Spear reserves the right to edit all copy presented for publication.

Front Cover: Sgt. 1st Class Michael Lindsay, left, Capt. Matthew Chaney, center, and Sgt. 1st Class Jarion Halbisengibbs, right, stand for their photograph at Fort Carson, Colo., May 12, 2009. The Army awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, its highest medal for valor, to Halbisengibbs, and Chaney and Lindsay, received Silver Stars as a result of their actions during a raid in Iraq. Photo by Ed Andrieski.

Highlights



**Missing SF Soldier awarded
posthumous DSC after 42 years**

19



**Navy SEAL
credits mentor
for space
mission
preparation**

20



**Combat Controller receives
two Bronze Stars**

34

Departments

SOF Around the World

Iraqi commandos graduate grueling 50-day course ... 4

SF fine tune Iraqi SOF marksmanship ... 6

5th Emergency Response Battalion to stand down ... 8

Operation Good Heart saves Iraqi girl ... 10

JSOTF-P assists WWII Filipino vets ... 12

SOCAPAC conference room dedicated to SF Soldier ... 14

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Green Berets awarded DSC, Silver Stars ... 16

Missing SF Soldier awarded posthumous DSC ... 19

Naval Special Warfare Command

SEAL credits mentor for space mission preparation ... 20

SEALs prove survival techniques ... 24

Boat team conducts freefall training ... 26

Vice president visits BUD/S training ... 27

Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command

Marines, Sailors conduct marksmanship training ... 28

MARSOC holds first Individual Training Course ... 30

Jump ops bring MARSOC down to earth ... 31

MSOC practice high-angle shooting, demolition ... 32

Air Force Special Operations Command

Combat Controller receives two Bronze Stars ... 34

Air Commandos honor those with the 'Guts to try' ... 36

Headquarters

USSOCOM history: Dawn of the Devils: 1st SSF ... 38

Fallen Heroes ... 39

COMMANDO GRADUATES

Hardened and ready to p

*By Staff Sgt. Bryan Franks
SOTF – Central Public Affairs*

More than 80 Iraqi Special Operations Forces soldiers recently graduated in Baghdad after completing nearly 50 days of dawn-to-dusk training to join the ranks of Iraq's most elite soldiers.

"You are taking up a place of honor in this organization," said Iraqi Maj. Gen. Abdu Ghani, commander of the Counter-Terrorism Command and guest

speaker of the graduation. "It's up to you to carry out the missions that will provide our country with security. Terrorism will not be the future because of you."

The ISOF brigade has Soldiers based throughout the country to provide the government of Iraq a premiere counterterrorism force that is ready to strike terrorists at a moment's notice.

"You have been good students," the CTC commander said. "There are a lot of missions waiting for you. You are the men of the hour, and the other soldiers will look at you with respect."

Commando training took the students through blocks of individual and team-building instruction to include stress management, marksmanship, fast-roping, close-quarter battle, combat operations and continuous physical training.

"The training was very good," said a major from Baghdad who will serve in the 7th Regional Commando Battalion in Mosul. "I started crying because we are done with our training and I can go to Mosul and carry out missions," he said.

This was the fourth class of elite soldiers taught exclusively by instructors from the Iraqi Special Warfare Center and School. The Iraqi instructors constantly pushed the future Commandos to the limit.

"I never thought of quitting. I treated it like a convoy ... and they (convoys) never stop," said a 21-year-old Baghdad native. "We all feel like we're giving something back to this country."

His father, who was on hand to watch his son walk in



An Iraqi Special Warfare Center and School instructor talks with a Commando course student during marksmanship training. More than 80 students graduated from the Commando course April 16 in Baghdad. Photo courtesy of Iraqi Special Operations Forces Combat Camera.

Protect Iraq

his footsteps, was proud that he completed the Commando course so they can now both wear the Commando patch.

"I'm very proud that he finished his training ... I never had any doubts," said the staff sergeant with the 3rd ISOF Regiment. "Like father, like son."



Iraqi Special Warfare Center and School Commando course students conduct a team-building exercise to test their ability to work together under stressful situations. The students graduated from the Commando course April 16 in Baghdad. Photo courtesy of Iraqi Special Operations Forces Combat Camera.



Iraqi Special Warfare Center and School Commando course students put all the training together during the combat operation block of instruction. More than 80 students graduated from the Commando course April 16 in Baghdad. Photo courtesy of Iraqi Special Operations Forces Combat Camera.

Special Forces assist brothers-in-arms

By Spc. Ben Fox

SOTF – North Public Affairs

Special Forces Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq, conducted a four-day marksmanship course April 10 in Mosul for 19 Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

Four United States Special Forces instructors led the Soldiers through various fundamentals to prepare them for long-range target engagement, such as enemy marksmen and suicide vehicle-borne IED drivers.

The primary instructor for the course said the training was similar to sniper training in some aspects, but it was not designed

for certification purposes. The course was intended to arm the Soldiers with techniques they can use on the battlefield.

Course topics included basic marksmanship fundamentals, weapons familiarization, slightly exposed and moving targets, and adjusting optics for environmental conditions with unknown distances.

A USSF sergeant major familiar with the training said providing advanced marksmanship training for conventional forces is not uncommon.

“This training gives that conventional force commander a capability to employ; it gives the unit the ability to conduct its own sniper overwatch,” the sergeant major said.

Beginning with basic fundamentals, instructors taught the students how to use their weapon systems and



in fine-tuning marksmanship skills

optics for long-range marksmanship. Heading out to the range with M-14 Enhanced Battle Rifles, M4 carbines and an M110 semi-automatic sniper system, students practiced what they learned by grouping their shots on paper targets.

The students also practiced aiming for targets with limited exposure. Instructors set up cardboard silhouettes at distances of 100 and 200 meters. The silhouettes were twisted on poles to reduce the time of exposure.

An instructor said the targets' exposure time is similar to that of someone emerging from an alley to throw a grenade and then going back – a situation often encountered in certain parts of Mosul.

Later during the course, students were tasked to engage thinner targets moving side to side, which simulated an enemy combatant running to a fighting position.

To fine-tune accuracy, instructors taught students to determine wind speed through observation and to target distances using optic sights on the weapons.

“In order to effectively engage select targets at long ranges, it is imperative for a marksman to calculate and adjust for environmental influences such as wind, heat and altitude,” said the primary instructor.

To test the snipers' fast-action response to moving targets, instructors allowed the students a few seconds to engage targets that appeared a limited number of times. In preparation for the final test, instructors set up steel targets

on a hillside at distances ranging from 200 to 630 meters. Students then had a limited period to determine the distance of each target and wind speed, adjust weapons accordingly and engage the targets as many times as they needed to eliminate the simulated threat.

For the final test, with just two rounds per target, students used all they learned to engage targets at varying distances with limited time.

A Soldier with 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd BCT, 1st Cavalry Division, said he was one of four Soldiers in his unit who volunteered to train on the unit's newly issued M-14 EBRs.

Even though this was his first time firing a sniper rifle, he said he will be able to take what he learned from the course and teach other Soldiers in his unit how to use the new weapon system.



3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers engage steel targets with an M-14 Enhanced Battle Rifle April 13, during a four-day marksmanship course at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, Iraq. Photo by Spc. Ben Fox.



5th ERB on track to stand on own

By Spc. Ben Fox
SOTF – North Public Affairs

After bringing Mosul terrorists to justice for more than three years, a group of highly trained Iraqis are preparing to operate without assistance from Coalition forces.

The 5th Emergency Response Battalion conducts raids with CF advisors in and around Mosul to arrest kidnappers, assassins and bomb makers.

“Most of these guys will tell you straight out: They want their city back, and they want their country back, and that’s why they do it,” said a 5th ERB platoon sergeant.

During the 5th ERB’s first 18 months, CF and U.S. State Department International Police Advisors coordinated 5th ERB’s missions locating improvised explosive devices and supporting other Iraqi units, he said. When they were not on missions, 5th ERB members trained with the International Police Advisors and CF to keep their skills sharp.

To prepare 5th ERB for training with U.S. Special



2008 Iraqi Coat of Arms

Forces, the Iraqis took the lead during forced-entry missions, said an IPA team leader, who has been with 5th ERB since it was established. Once 5th ERB demonstrated proficiency in the basics, USSF partnered with them to teach them more advanced skill sets.

Now the USSF role has moved from honing the 5th ERB’s tactical techniques, which include close-quarters battle, evidence collection and arrests, to training and advising 5th ERB leaders.

A USSF combat advisor, who is currently serving his second tour with 5th ERB, said his role since the previous deployment has changed from training the unit to teaching the NCOs to train their own.

“We continue to collaborate with Iraqi Security Forces as they shoulder more of the effort in defeating violent extremists in order to offer security to the people of Iraq,” he added.

The combat advisors are also teaching the leaders to gather intelligence and plan missions, allowing them the opportunity to lead missions independently.



“They want their city back, and they want their country back, and that’s why they do it.”

— 5th ERB platoon sergeant



A. The 5th Emergency Response Battalion leaders move to an objective during a simulated operation last month with U.S. Special Forces at Forward Operating Base Marez, Mosul, Iraq. Photo by Spc. Ben Fox.

B. A U.S. Special Forces combat advisor oversees the 5th Emergency Response Battalion infiltrate a building during a simulated operation last month at Forward Operating Base Marez, Mosul, Iraq. Photo by Spc. Ben Fox.

C. Members from the 5th Emergency Response Battalion provide overwatch while moving toward an objective during a simulated operation last month with U.S. Special Forces at Forward Operating Base Marez, Mosul, Iraq. Photo by Spc. Ben Fox.

D. A 5th Emergency Response Battalion NCO, with a U.S. Special Forces combat advisor, pulls security on an objective during a simulated operation last month. Photo by Spc. Ben Fox.





GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM - IRAQ
COMBINED JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS TASK FORCE – ARABIAN PENINSULA

Operation Good Heart gives 6-year-old Iraqi girl second chance at life

By Maj. April Olsen and Staff Sgt. Carl Hudson
CJSOTF – Arabian Peninsula

As an Iraqi girl and her mother carefully stepped out of a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle, they turned to find nearly an entire village anxious and waiting for their return from a two-month-long journey.

As the young Iraqi girl climbed out, she found herself smothered with kisses and hugs from the villagers as children threw candy like rice at a wedding. Bursting with newfound energy, the girl ran to greet her friends while her mother cried tears of joy.

The villagers, along with the mayor of Balad and other local leaders, recently welcomed home 6-year-old Tiba and her mother, Sareeya, in Balad, Iraq.

Operation Good Heart, a Coalition effort to save Tiba's life through a necessary heart surgery, had officially come to an end.

To save Tiba, Good Heart enlisted the assistance of U.S. Army Special Forces, a dedicated team of medical professionals from Maine Medical Center, volunteers from the local Ronald McDonald House and donations from Gryphon Airlines and the Sons of Sam Horn.

Tiba and Sareeya's journey began in the summer of



Tiba, 6, hugs a U.S. Soldier just before her trip home to Balad, Iraq. Tiba and her mother traveled to Portland, Maine, where Tiba received life-saving heart surgery as part of Operation Good Heart. Photo by Staff Sgt. Carl Hudson.

2008 when a team from 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) began working to locate medical specialists available to perform the surgery.

“It really started with a relationship we had with a friend of Tiba’s family,” said a 5th SFG(A) warrant officer, who preferred to be called “Chief Dave” due to operational security concerns.

“The previous unit started the process of getting her to the States, and we picked up where they left off.”

With passports and other paperwork in order, accommodations and travel plans were finalized.

After seven months of planning and coordination, Tiba and her mother left Balad with Soldiers from the 5th SFG(A) to receive the surgery in Portland, Maine, where a team from Maine Medical Center volunteered their services to perform the operation and provide follow-on care during her recovery.

“This is one of the more complex repairs we do,” said Dr. Reed Quinn, a pediatric surgeon responsible for Tiba’s surgery and recovery, in an interview with Kim Block of WGME 13 News.

“As for children we have brought, this will rate as probably one of two or three of the most complex children we’ve done from abroad.”

Following successful surgery, Tiba and Sareeya spent close to six weeks under the supervision of Quinn’s team to ensure Tiba was progressing and getting stronger.

During that time, local volunteers provided sightseeing opportunities and excursions to entertain Tiba. The Sons of Sam Horn, a nonprofit charity organization, donated gift cards, clothes and other items for Tiba and Sareeya.

Once back at home, Tiba shared only a few details about her experiences in the United States.

“We went everywhere,” she said. “I like bowling the most.”

Once the medical team declared Tiba well enough for travel, they returned to Iraq and were reunited with their family and friends.



Iraqi media interview Sareeya as she holds her daughter, Tiba, 6, in Balad, Iraq. During Operation Good Heart, Tiba received heart surgery at Maine Medical Center. Photo by Staff Sgt. Carl Hudson.

The mayor joined in the homecoming to personally welcome Tiba and Sareeya back home.

“In the name of the God most merciful, everybody is happy today,” said Amer Abdul Hadi Mirhoon, mayor of Balad. “I want to say that I appreciate the Americans for helping this little girl.”

Tiba’s father, Shehab, also noticed a change in Tiba’s health as he watched her run across their yard and play with her friends.

“I see her now, and she’s different,” he said. “Exactly today, 60 days. Two months I had to carry the pain of her being gone, but I took it because I knew she was going to come back well.”

“This is really indicative of our mission here in Iraq,” said Chief Dave. “It’s more than just security, it’s a coalition of people, and we’re working side by side with the people.”

During the celebration, Mirhoon personally thanked the Coalition.

“I ask God for a successful mission here for the American forces,” he said. “They’ve really supported us, and we appreciate everything.”

JSOTF-P assists Filipino WWII vets with compensation act

*By Petty Officer 1st Class Fletcher Gibson
Joint Special Operations Task Force-
Philippines Public Affairs*

U.S. servicemembers from the Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines are reaching out to Filipino veterans of World War II around Jolo City in Sulu province to help them claim war service compensation recently approved by the U.S. Congress.

Filipino vets have a number of ways to apply for the compensation, including by mail, online or in person. In order to spread awareness of the newly available benefits, the task force members on Jolo Island used the local Sundalo Show radio program to call for veterans who might not have the means to apply in any of those traditional ways due to limited resources or mobility.

So far, five veterans in the Jolo City area have responded to the radio-based advertisement, including one bedridden 94-year-old farmer-turned-soldier who traveled with his grandson to the radio station to provide his information. Other veterans arrived with uniforms, commendations and other mementos of the war. One Tausug veteran even carried a flag presented to him by Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

“Meeting him reinforced to me and my

team that the people of the Philippines and the people of the United States have a shared history,” said Army Sgt. Justin Richmond, one of the JSOTF-P team members meeting with local vets at the radio station.

“He insisted that he was in awe that the U.S. forces wanted to meet with him,” added U.S. Army Capt. Adria Horn, another member of JSOTF-P who met with local vets. “We claimed it was the exact opposite. It was our awe of him that led to the meeting.”

The U.S. Soldiers on Jolo have aided veterans by answering questions about the claims process, helping them complete the necessary paperwork and assisting them with submitting their claims for compensation.

The recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, approved by Congress in February, provides funds to compensate Philippine soldiers who served with U.S. forces during World War II. Under the new law, eligible veterans with U.S. citizenship will receive a one-time lump-sum payment of \$15,000, while non-U.S. citizens will receive a one-time lump-sum payment of \$9,000.

Richmond estimates that there are nearly 130 World War II veterans still living in Sulu province. Veterans of WWII looking for more information on the application process can refer to the U.S. Embassy’s Web site.





(Left) A Filipino Army colonel World War II veteran, who was once captured by the Japanese and reported missing in action, holds the American flag he was presented after being recovered from captivity. JSOTF-P personnel in Sulu are assisting Filipino World War II veterans in submitting claims for veteran's compensation. The JSOTF-P is helping the Armed Forces of the Philippines foster peace and security in the southern Philippines at the request of the Philippine government. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Roland Franklin.

(Bottom) Army Capt. Adria Horn, temporarily deployed with the Joint Special Operations Task Force - Philippines, embraces a Filipino World War II veteran in Jolo City, Sulu province, Republic of the Philippines, April 14, 2009. JSOTF-P personnel in Sulu are assisting Filipino World War II veterans in submitting claims for veteran's compensation. The JSOTF-P is helping the Armed Forces of the Philippines foster peace and security in the southern Philippines at the request of the Philippine government. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Roland Franklin.



SOCPAC conference room dedicated to SF Soldier

By SOCPAC Public Affairs

During a ceremony held June 5, 2009, at Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii, Special Operations Command - Pacific's new executive conference room was dedicated to one of the command's very best – Sgt. 1st Class Mark Wayne Jackson, a Special Forces noncommissioned officer who gave his life in support of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines.

With Jackson's family in the front row and nearly 200 servicemembers attending the ceremony or watching remotely, Maj. Gen. Sal Cambria delivered a speech that both honored the memory of Jackson and inspired the SOCPAC team members to rededicate themselves to making the Asian-Pacific, and the entire world, a better place for all.

“When the command decided to construct a new conference room, we felt it imperative that the room's décor reflect the time honored traditions and contributions of the Special Operations community and, in so doing, will provide us a daily reminder of those who went before us and gave so much. We

also thought it very important to dedicate the room to a fellow Special Operations warrior who not only served in the theater of operations but also embodied those special qualities that set Special Operations members apart,” said Cambria.

The new conference room serves as the hub for the Special Operations plans and operations that support the



**Sgt. 1st Class
Mark Wayne Jackson**



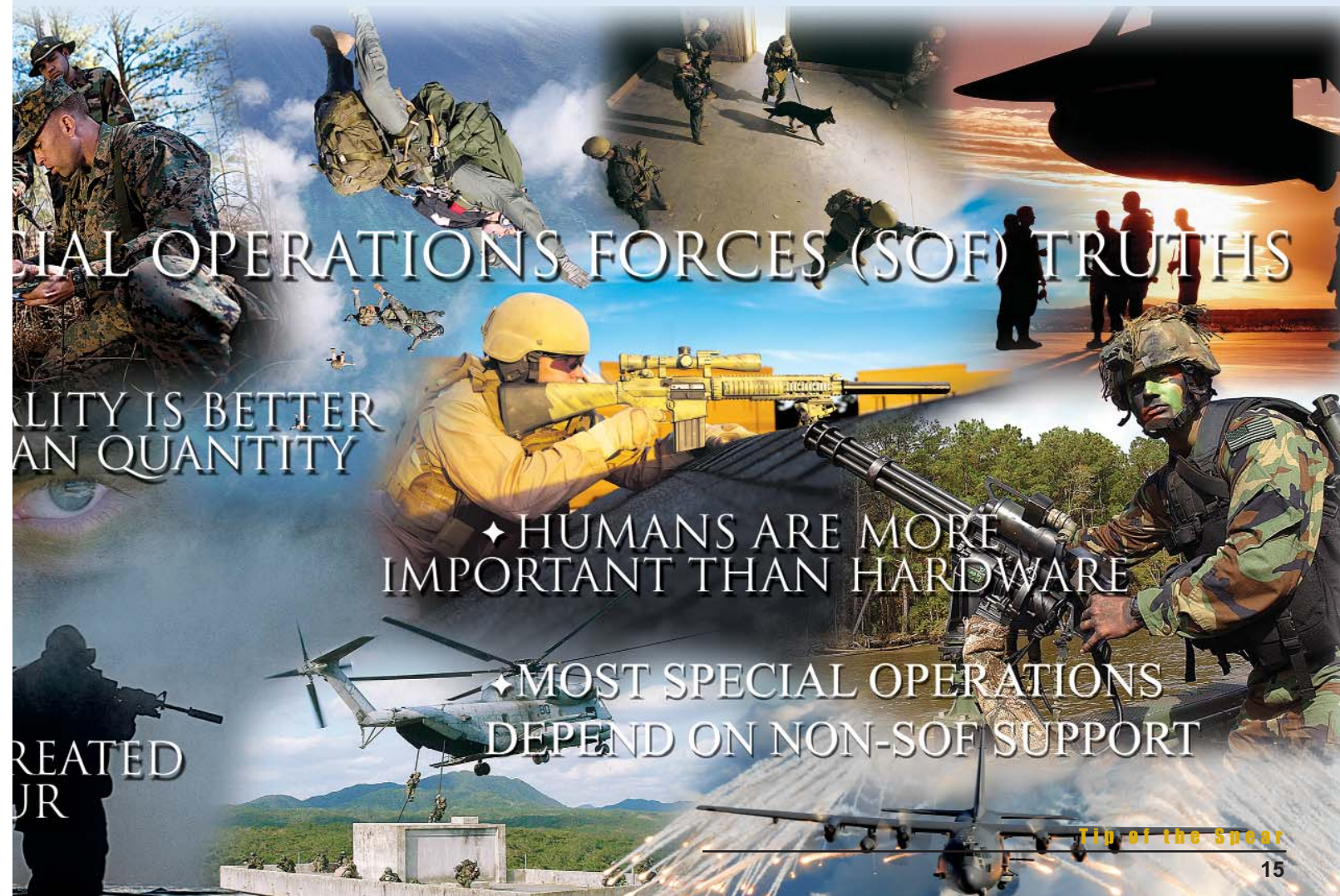
Pacific Command's objectives of deterring aggression, advancing security cooperation and responding to crises throughout the Asian-Pacific. SOCPAC is one of only three theater Special Operations commands in the world with a forward deployed presence of all primary Special Operations Forces including Navy SEALs, U.S. Army Special Forces, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Forces. SOCPAC's span of responsibility covers approximately half of the earth's surface — 15 time zones and 36 nations.

The room, which appears more like a museum than a conference room, honors both current and past Special Operations Forces. One wall depicts SOCPAC's components; those units that carry out the challenging missions required to keep the Asian-Pacific stable and secure. The conference room wall states "To Honor Those Before Us" and has imagery dating back to World War I. Another wall has imagery reflecting the Special Operations Forces Truths. The walls profoundly display distinguished groups of Special Operations Forces performing a vast range of missions, from direct action to unconventional warfare, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.



Maj. Gen. Sal Cambria presents Sgt. 1st Class Mark Jackson's parents, William and Janice Jackson, with a replica of the memorial plaque that hangs just outside the conference room dedicated to Jackson. Jackson was killed in action in 2002 while supporting the Armed Forces of the Philippines during Operation Enduring Freedom. Photo by Lance Cpl. Nathan McCord.

"Rest assured this room will serve as the forum for discussions critical to future security in the Pacific community," said Cambria.





U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Soldiers receive Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Stars

By 10th SFG (A) Public Affairs

Sgt. 1st Class Jarion Halbisengibbs received the Distinguished Service Cross, while Capt. Matthew Chaney and Sgt. 1st Class Michael Lindsay received the Silver Star during an award ceremony at the Special Events Center at Fort Carson, Colo., May 14.

The Special Forces Soldiers from Operational Detachment – Alpha 083, received the medals for their heroism in action Sep. 10, 2007. Advising a combined assault element of Iraqi National Police on an intelligence-driven raid, their mission was to capture a high-value Islamic State of Iraq terrorist who was running a kidnapping and extortion ring.

Adm. Eric T. Olson, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, and Lt. Gen. John Mulholland Jr., commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, presented the awards to the Soldiers with more than 700 present to witness the historic ceremony.

“You have listened to and read the account of that night on 10 September 2007, a mission that asked the best of some of our nation’s finest,” said Olson speaking to the guests in attendance.

“This was ODA 083, a Green Beret A-Team in action, under pressure, at risk,” Olson added. “Sergeant Halbisengibbs exemplifies the spirit and ethos of these warriors. He is a gifted team member and individual Soldier, one who raises the performance and morale of those around him. Today we will also recognize two more of

them, Captain Chaney and Sergeant First Class Lindsay, for their extraordinary courage in that action.”

During that raid, three team members, Chaney, Lindsay and Halbisengibbs, demonstrated exceptional bravery and valor in close combat while they succeeded in eliminating a heavily armed and entrenched enemy force from within a fortified stronghold.

At about 2 a.m., after infiltrating by air into an unplanned landing zone less than 30 meters from the enemy position, Chaney directed the assault force towards the targeted buildings.

Facing “brown-out” conditions caused by the rotor wash of the helicopters and only 10 percent illumination, the assault force immediately came under enemy fire. Undaunted, these three Special Forces leaders directed their Iraqi counterparts and initiated the assault on the array of buildings.

After clearing the closest structure, the assault element immediately came under enemy machine-gun fire from the furthest building, approximately 50 meters away, causing a dangerous pause in the momentum of the assault.

Working in concert, these three leaders immediately redirected their assault element toward the most urgent threat, the third building.

Lindsay and Halbisengibbs killed three insurgents who were firing from the building as the force assaulted. Chaney and Lindsay then placed themselves in a critical position at the breach point, while Halbisengibbs prepared to employ a fragmentation grenade.

Before the assault force entered, the fragmentation grenade killed two



Sgt. 1st Class Michael Lindsay, left, Capt. Matthew Chaney, center, and Staff Sgt. Jarion Halbisengibbs, right, stand for their photograph at Fort Carson, Colo., May 12, 2009. Photo by Ed Andrieski.



of the enemy fighters waiting inside.

Within seconds of entering the building, the three killed two more enemy fighters. While trying to acquire targets through the haze caused by the grenade blast, Chaney and Lindsay were strafed by intense AK-47 fire.

Chaney was shot through the pelvis, hip and buttocks while Lindsay received gunshot wounds to the throat and abdomen.

Despite their serious wounds, they, along with Halbisengibbs, continued to engage the enemy inside until an enemy grenade exploded and wounded all three, propelling Chaney and Lindsay back through the door of the house and out into the courtyard. The grenade blast sent Halbisengibbs to the floor and, hit with shrapnel, he sustained wounds to his firing hand and damage to his radio and night vision device.

As Chaney and Lindsay lay wounded and exposed in the courtyard, the remainder of the assault force continued to fight insurgents in the other structures.

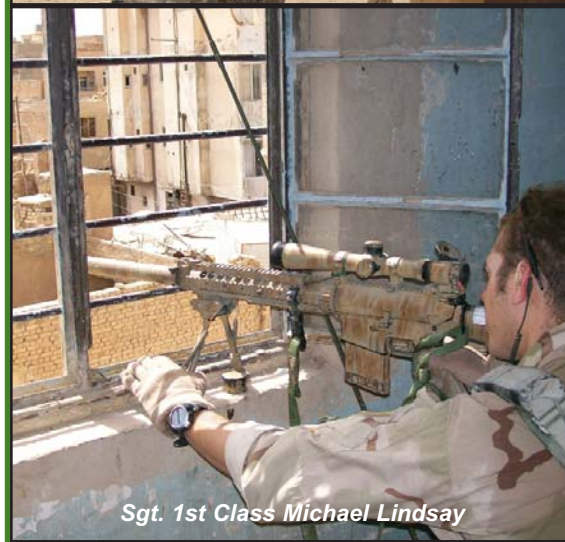
Chaney, although suffering from multiple gunshot wounds, continued to exercise command, and while directing actions on the objective, killed another insurgent who was firing at him from an open door.

As a result of the grenade blast, Lindsay had been thrown into the line of fire from another enemy position to the east of the main building but he ignored his wounds and he continued to engage the enemy.

With Chaney and Lindsay



Capt. Matthew Chaney



Sgt. 1st Class Michael Lindsay



Staff Sgt. Jarion Halbisengibbs

blown from the building, Halbisengibbs found himself wounded and alone inside the target building. As enemy fire had destroyed his radio and damaged his night vision device, his vision was impaired and he was unable to contact the remainder of the assault force to request support. Taking immediate and decisive action, Halbisengibbs leapt to his feet and quickly cleared the room.

Making his way out to the courtyard, Halbisengibbs immediately passed a verbal status report to his ODA indicating his status but that he could continue to fight. During the course of relaying this message, he immediately came under small arms fire at close range from an enemy position not yet cleared by the National Police assault force.

As Halbisengibbs reacted to the threat, he was shot in the abdomen; the bullet traveled through his stomach and exited at his hip. Ignoring this second debilitating gunshot wound, he engaged and killed the enemy within 12 feet of his position.

Halbisengibbs then took cover and rallied the remainder of the Iraqi National Police and assisted in securing the objective area. Only when the enemy was eliminated and the objective was secure, did he reveal the seriousness of his wounds and accept medical attention.

After the force was firmly in control of the objective, the three were evacuated to the Combat Support Hospital in Balad. These three Special



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Forces leaders had led their Iraqi National Police counterparts in a highly successful operation during which time they had demonstrated immeasurable fortitude and valor. Their personal example, which involved killing nine of the enemy in close combat, resulted in the death and capture of several enemy terrorists, including the intended target.

Chaney's valorous leadership that night and unwavering dedication to mission accomplishment, despite sustaining multiple gunshot wounds, made a significant contribution to defeating al Qaida operations in the Samarra area.

Chaney's bullet and shrapnel wounds kept him in Balad for 24 hours where he received his initial surgery before transport to Landstuhl, Germany. During the next eight days, he underwent two additional surgeries before final transport and care at Evans Army Hospital at Fort Carson, Colo. Chaney has returned to duty, having recently returned from another deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and completing the Special Forces Combat Divers Qualification Course.

Lindsay demonstrated unparalleled valor in the face of a determined enemy and directly contributed to mission success that night.

Lindsay's bullet and shrapnel wounds were assessed in Balad, prompting immediate transport to Landstuhl where doctors removed almost two feet of his intestines. His follow-on stay at Walter Reed Army Medical Center

lasted three weeks. Since receiving these life-threatening wounds, Lindsay has undergone two more surgeries and still carries bullet fragments in his pelvis. He has returned to duty and, like Chaney, has served another tour in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Halbisengibbs was responsible for singlehandedly killing six of the enemy on the objective and personally eliminating a high value terrorist.

Surgeons in Balad worked to repair the wounds to Halbisengibbs' hand and abdomen, during which time they removed 18 centimeters of his small intestine. He was quickly transported to Landstuhl, and on to Walter Reed with Lindsay, where he stayed for approximately three weeks. He has since received an additional surgery on his hand, has returned to duty, and is ready for the next deployment.

"It is the valor of these three Soldiers with their unparalleled courage under fire, decisive leadership and tenacity in close combat that led to the successful elimination of a critical terrorist cell. Their quiet professionalism and modesty continues to radiate throughout the unit," said Col. Darsie Rogers Jr., 10th SFG(A) commander.

Rogers continued by saying "The feats of these brave men will forever have a place in history alongside other Green Berets who have fought the wars before us. These men, and many others like them, answered the call of their nation. They have done so as quiet professionals, as is expected of our Green Berets and Special Operators, and we pay tribute to the courage of these magnificent Soldiers and their selfless service to our nation."



(From left to right) Sgt. 1st Class Jarion Halbisengibbs, recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross, Capt. Matthew Chaney and Sgt. 1st Class Michael Lindsay, recipients of the Silver Star, received their awards during a ceremony at the Special Events Center at Fort Carson, Colo., May 14. Photo by Spec. Henrique de Holleben.

Missing SF Soldier awarded posthumous DSC after 42 years

By USASOC Public Affairs

The history of the U.S. Army Special Forces Regiment is brief in relation to that of the rest of the U.S. Army, but long enough for fierce battles to become old war stories and for training missions to be lost to the vagueness of time and personal recollection.

For the men who have worn the Green Beret, however, the memories of their Special Forces brothers, especially those missing in action and killed in combat, will never fade.

After 42 years, Special Forces senior leaders stood at the second annual Special Forces Symposium in Fayetteville April 22 to remember Maj. Jack Stewart, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), who became missing during a ferocious engagement in Vietnam. They presented his family with Stewart's Distinguished Service Cross, which he received for exceptional gallantry while leading a Mobile Strike Force company comprised of U.S. and South Vietnamese soldiers near the Cambodian border March 24, 1967.

On that day, two American Green Berets joined with South Vietnamese soldiers to conduct a helicopter assault near the Cambodian border. The combined unit included then Capt. Jack Stewart and Staff Sgt. Roger Hallberg. After landing near Bu Dop in Phuoc Long province, their patrol was greeted by enemy automatic weapons fire. Hallberg returned to the rear area to report on the contact with the North Vietnamese Army force.

During the firefight, Stewart rallied his men to secure a helicopter landing zone against an advancing NVA force later estimated to be two heavily armed battalions, greatly outnumbering Stewart's men. Stewart was last seen by American forces as he and Hallberg provided cover to retreating members of their Mobile Strike Force company.

Representing the Stewart family at the ceremony were Diane Hasner, Stewart's former wife; son Troy Stewart and daughter Karen Kelly; Barbara Stewart Pratt, his sister; and Kermit Stewart, his cousin.

Speaking on behalf of the family during the ceremony, Kermit Stewart recounted the Stewart family's uniformed service to the nation beginning with the Revolutionary War, through the Civil War, both World Wars, Korea and Vietnam.

In a brief, humorous moment, Kermit paralleled the 55 years required for Ezekiel Stewart to receive a pension for his service with the New Jersey State Volunteers during the American Revolution to the 42 years between the disappearance of Maj. Jack Stewart and the awarding of the DSC.

"I don't know why it takes the Stewarts so long to be recognized for their service," Kermit said, "but we finally get there."

Wearing a red, white and blue scarf embroidered with Maj. Stewart's name, unit and date of his disappearance, Hasner spoke of the importance of the award and ceremony to give closure the missing Green Beret.

"This has been a long time coming," Hasner said. "It's time for closure for family, friends and the men involved in the situation that day."

One of the men involved in the action that day was John Throckmorton, the lone survivor of the firefight. In the days following the fateful mission, then 2nd Lt. Throckmorton submitted Stewart and Hallberg for valor awards. After meeting the Hallberg family four years ago and learning that neither man had been awarded for their heroism in 1967, Throckmorton resubmitted paperwork, which led to Hallberg being awarded the Silver Star and the eventual awarding of the Distinguished Service Cross to Stewart.



Diane Hasner, formerly married to Army Special Forces Maj. Jack Stewart, holds the Distinguished Service Cross awarded to the Green Beret missing in action from the Vietnam War. Stewart was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for exceptional gallantry while leading a Mobile Strike Force company comprised of U.S. and South Vietnamese soldiers near the Cambodian border March 24, 1967. Photo by Staff Sgt. Curt Squires.



Cmdr. Chris Cassidy smiles after donning his spacesuit during zero gravity training at the Neutral Buoyancy Lab. The NBL is a pool that simulates zero gravity to train astronauts for upcoming missions. The NBL contains full mock-ups of the International Space Station for the astronauts to train. Cassidy, a SEAL, is a mission specialist on the mission STS-127 to the International Space Station. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Dominique Lasco.

Navy SEAL credits mentor for space mission preparation

*By Petty Officer 2nd Class Terrence Siren
Naval Special Warfare Public Affairs*

A Navy SEAL will be aboard NASA's shuttle Endeavor as a mission specialist and part of the Space Transportation System 127 crew expected to launch in July.

Navy Cmdr. Chris Cassidy is one of the eight mission specialists responsible for delivering the final components of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's Kibo laboratory to the International Space Station. The 16-day mission will include five spacewalks and the installation of two platforms outside

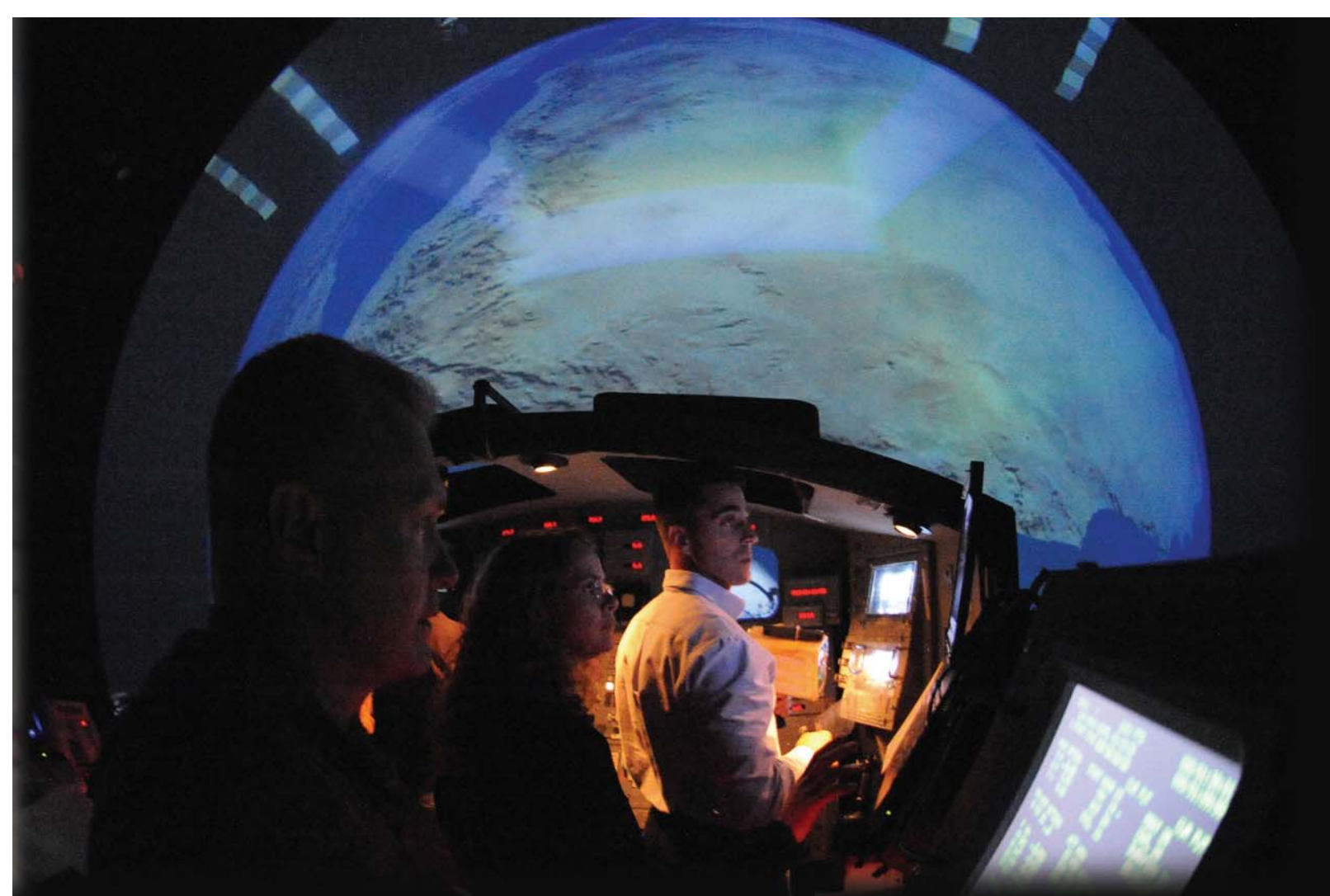
the Japanese portion of the space station.

"He's doing really well. I'm always impressed with Chris's utter calm. Nothing phases him," said Holly Ridings, a 10-year NASA veteran and lead flight director for STS-127. "It's that whole focused Navy SEAL thing."

Cassidy graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics in 1993. From there, he attended Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training in Coronado, Calif.

After receiving his first assignment to SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team 2 in Little Creek, Va., Cassidy had a





Cmdr. Chris Cassidy practices docking the space shuttle with his shuttle commander and pilot in a virtual reality simulator at Johnson Space Center. Cassidy, a SEAL, is a mission specialist for the mission STS-127 to the International Space Station. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Dominique Lasco.

conversation with Capt. William Shepherd, who was the first Navy SEAL in NASA's history to become an astronaut.

"This ensign called me one day back in the nineties when he was getting ready to get out of BUD/S ... and he said part of his interest was to, maybe, be positioned in his SEAL career so that being an astronaut was an option available to him," said Shepherd, now the head science advisor of U.S. Special Operations Command, when he recalled his first phone conversation with Cassidy.

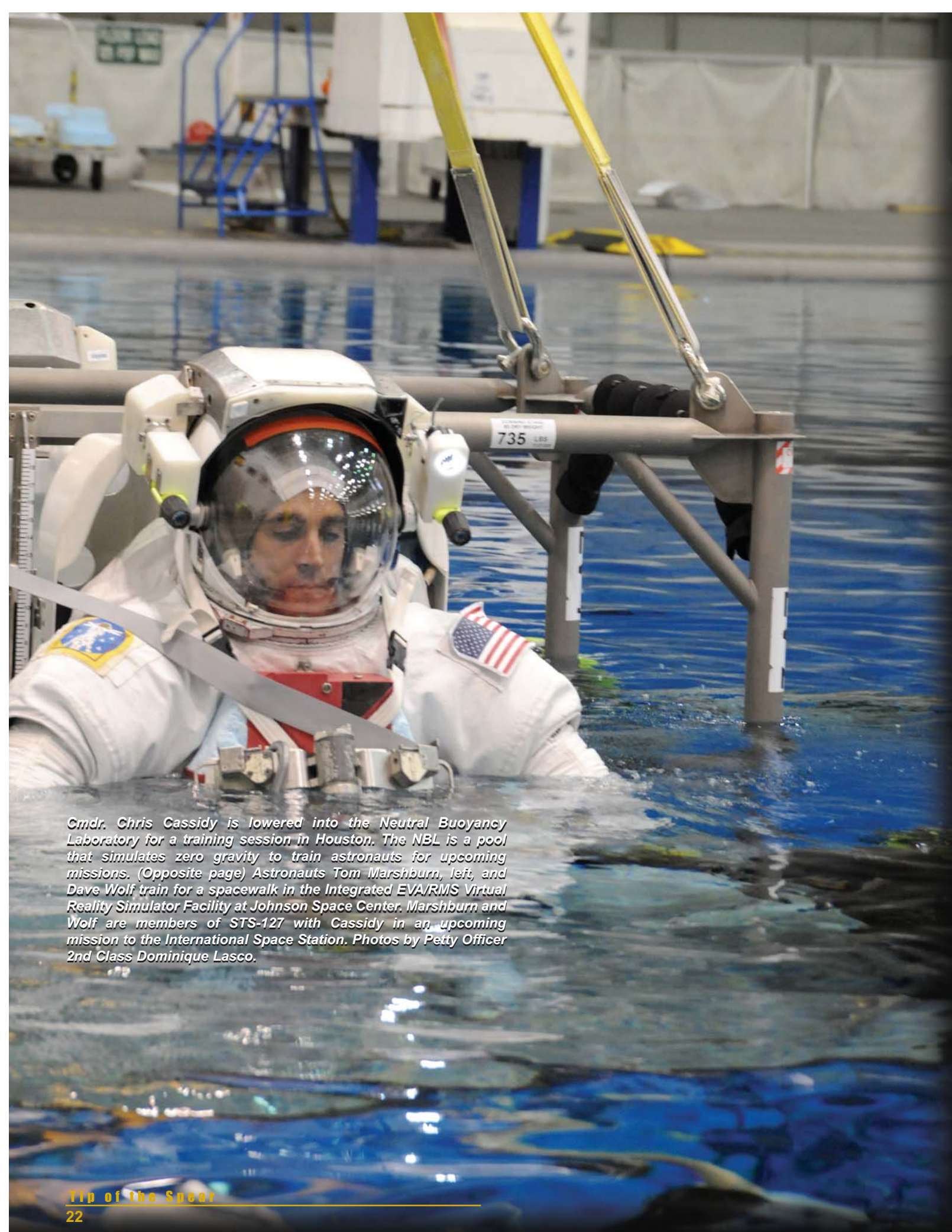
After his first tour with SDVT-2, Cassidy spent 10 years as a member of Navy SEAL teams, including executive officer and operations officer of Special Boat Team 20 in Norfolk, Va.; platoon commander at SEAL Team 3 in Coronado; and platoon commander after returning to SDVT-2. In the course of four, six-month deployments to Afghanistan and the Mediterranean, Cassidy was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat 'V' and Presidential Unit Citation for missions with the Army's 10th Mountain Division on the Afghan/Pakistan border. Cassidy was made an honorary member of the 10th Mountain Division by its Soldiers, and, in 2004, he

received a second Bronze Star.

"But, really," said Cassidy, "the seed of my desire to be an astronaut was sown at the SDV team and in conversations with Captain Shepherd about, you know, what life as an astronaut is like. And it excited me to think about putting on a spacesuit and going outside and doing the work the astronauts do."

Following in Shepherd's footsteps, Cassidy applied to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and received his master's degree in ocean engineering in 2000. Shortly thereafter, with support from his command, he applied for NASA's space program through the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

"The misconception is that to be an astronaut, you have to have been a pilot or have time as a pilot of some type of aircraft, and that's just not true ... the fact is anybody can apply to be an astronaut. There are very basic requirements. A bachelor's degree in some technical field ... maybe a few other ones pertaining to eyesight and height and weight and that sort of thing. But, when you come right down to it, pretty much anybody can apply," Cassidy said.



Cmdr. Chris Cassidy is lowered into the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory for a training session in Houston. The NBL is a pool that simulates zero gravity to train astronauts for upcoming missions. (Opposite page) Astronauts Tom Marshburn, left, and Dave Wolf train for a spacewalk in the Integrated EVA/RMS Virtual Reality Simulator Facility at Johnson Space Center. Marshburn and Wolf are members of STS-127 with Cassidy in an upcoming mission to the International Space Station. Photos by Petty Officer 2nd Class Dominique Lasco.



“We have veterinarians, medical doctors, military folks from all sorts of backgrounds – helicopter aviators; P-3 pilots; myself as a SEAL; Navy divers – so, we have a broad array of folks,” he added.

Cassidy was accepted into NASA’s Astronaut Candidacy Program in 2004.

“There are several reasons why Naval Special Warfare people – SEALs, and SWCCs (Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen) – are really suitable to do this,” said Cassidy. “One is that we understand what a team is. Most of the experience in the SEAL community is about being a team. It starts with BUD/S... The concept of ‘team’ is really what defines us as a community. And that this would translate to a space mission is pretty obvious,” said Cassidy.

Shepherd explained the importance of Cassidy’s mission.

“You have to have big vehicles; these vehicles are too big to be built on the ground and launched in one piece,” said Shepherd. “They’ve got to be put up by big boosters; they’ve got to be assembled in Earth’s orbit. You need EVAs (Extravehicular Activity) to do this. So, what Chris is doing ... he’s showing the capability of the space agencies that are working together now to be able to build

and operate big vehicles in space. And if we can’t do EVA successfully ... we can’t pursue this objective of having humans travel elsewhere in the solar system and doing these expeditions, these explorations.”

“I was really blessed with great mentors and folks who kind of guided me when I was at the SEAL teams ... There are so many opportunities that exist in the Navy ... the biggest thing is: Do your job and do your job well. And, if you do that, the doors are going to open, open wide for you to all kinds of other opportunities,” Cassidy said.

The Space Shuttle Endeavor is scheduled to take Mission Commander Mark Polansky; Marine Corps Lt. Col. Douglas Hurley; Canadian Space Agency astronaut Julie Payette; Tom Marshburn and Dave Wolf into space.

“I’m really humbled and honored to represent the SEAL teams and the Navy here at NASA and on my space mission. I realize every day that it could be anybody ... so, it’s just really, really humbling to be here and be the fortunate one to be selected, and I feel fortunate every day. That said, I’m excited and motivated to take my Trident to space and execute the perfect plan perfectly. And that’s what I plan to do and do proudly by Naval Special Warfare.”



SEAL Candidates Prove in Alaska

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Erika Manzano
Naval Special Warfare Public Affairs

SEAL candidates recently battled all night through deep snow and freezing wind to complete the final exercise of cold-weather training on Kodiak Island, Alaska.

The 24-hour final training exercise, or FTX, is the ultimate test for candidates as they put their accumulated cold-weather survival knowledge to use in a real-world scenario. Evolutions during the FTX included a 500-yard ocean swim through 34-degree water to a rocky beach at dusk, a river crossing via highline and long-range navigation through mountain wilderness to infiltrate and establish covert surveillance of a target site. The 25 SEAL candidates did it all while carrying half their body weight in gear and weapons.

"These guys did great," said SEAL Ensign Ron Rector, officer in charge of Naval Special Warfare Center Detachment Kodiak. "They were motivated, and it's an awesome class. They love doing this stuff even though there were a lot of tough evolutions."

The 28-day course was designed to give candidates the skills they need to endure and operate in frigid conditions. Candidates coming to Kodiak learn everything from how to use specialized survival gear to plotting a course in the mountainous, snow-covered terrain.

"We teach them how to survive in the cold weather starting with the basics -- setting up tents and starting their stoves," said one veteran SEAL instructor who requested anonymity due to his active status. "Most of these guys have never spent a night out in the cold before, and we have to show them how to utilize their gear."

During the 28-day course, candidates learned how to create shelter, build a fire and find food. Learning how to move through the wilderness without getting lost is an

important part of the training.

"We learned how to navigate using terrain association and how to find terrain features on a map," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Joshua Miller.

"Navigation out here is really tough because everything looks the same.

Before the candidates completed the FTX, they spent days in the remote mountains of Kodiak, learning from instructors all the things they can't learn in a classroom such as how to make a snow cave for shelter and what to do if they had to carry on with minimal gear.

"We were shown how to survive with just a fire and our knife," said Miller.

During training leading up to the FTX, the class members spent all night in snow caves on Pyramid Mountain, then traveled by snowshoes and ski poles over several feet of snow drifts to the Buskin River for a re-warming drill.

While instructors closely monitored and gave encouragement, members of the platoon walked onto the ice until they broke through and were submerged up to their necks for five minutes in near freezing water. Then, they exited and worked in pairs, assembling their two-man tents and firing up their stoves to avoid hypothermia.

"The first feeling in the water is pure shock," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Gaviria. "It shocks your body and takes your breath away."

"The idea is to teach these guys that this is what it's like if you're really frozen," said Rector. "It's also a confidence builder, to let them know they can do this and they are going to be all right."

The candidates in SEAL Qualification Class 272 began SEAL training in June 2008. The cold-weather training is part of a yearlong process toward earning the coveted trident breast insignia worn only by the Navy's elite Special Warfare Commandos.

"The idea is to teach these guys that this is what it's like if you're really frozen. It's also a confidence builder, to let them know they can do this and they are going to be all right."

— SEAL Ensign Ron Rector

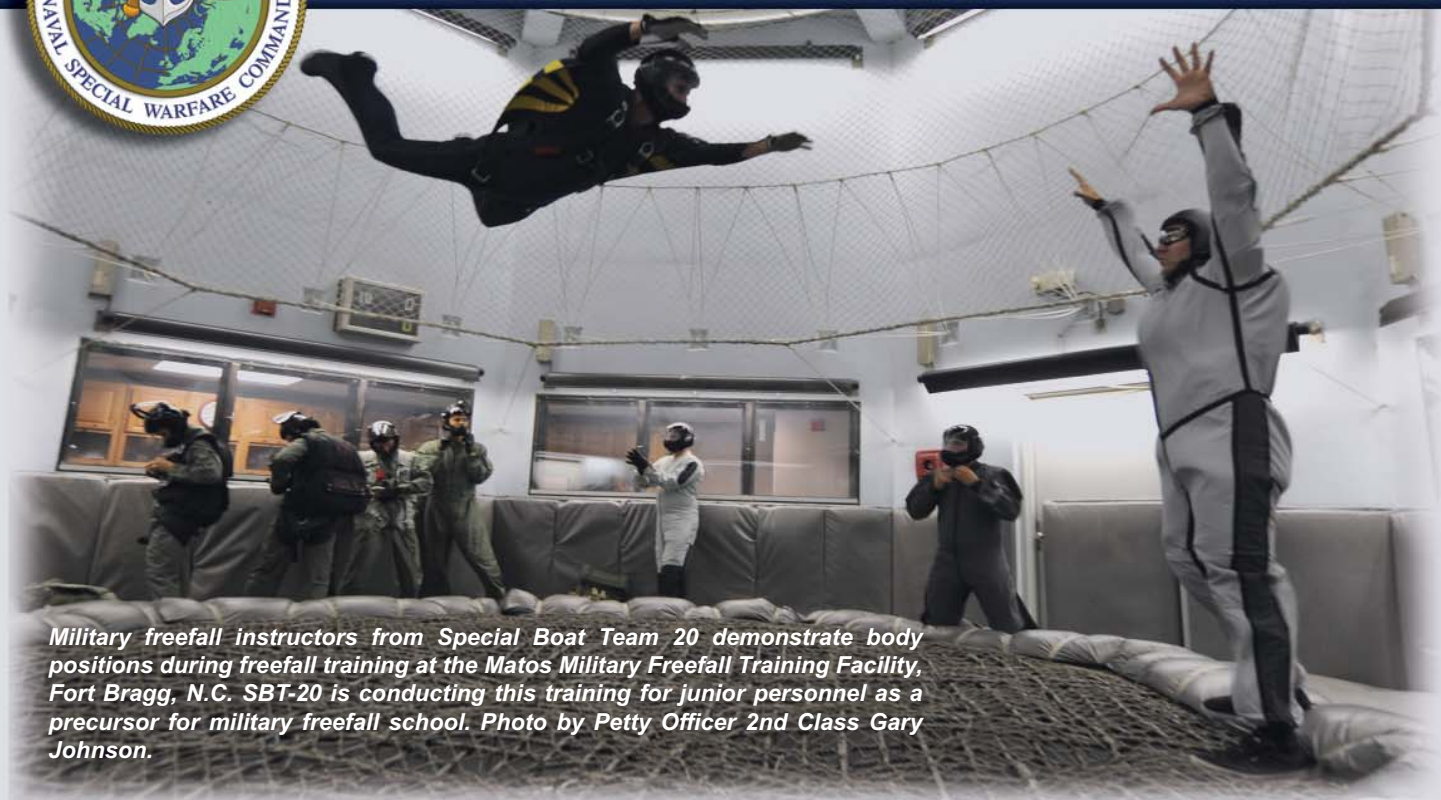
Survival Techniques



SEAL Qualification Training candidates waded out of the Buskin River after spending five minutes in the near freezing water during a re-warming exercise. Candidates completed the re-warming exercise after spending 48 hours in the Alaskan mountains learning how to navigate through the rugged terrain and survive the frigid conditions. The 28-day cold-weather training course taught in Kodiak is part of a yearlong process to become a Navy SEAL. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Erika Manzano.



NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND



Military freefall instructors from Special Boat Team 20 demonstrate body positions during freefall training at the Matos Military Freefall Training Facility, Fort Bragg, N.C. SBT-20 is conducting this training for junior personnel as a precursor for military freefall school. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Gary Johnson.

Boat Team conducts freefall training

*By Petty Officer 2nd Class Gary Johnson III
NSWG-4 Public Affairs*

Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen (SWCC) from Special Boat Team 20, stationed at Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Va., conducted freefall training at the Matos Military Freefall Training Facility, Fort Bragg, N.C.

“The overall goal of this training is to prepare personnel for military freefall school and to familiarize them with movements while in a controlled environment,” said Chief Aircrew Survival Equipmentman Justin Hodge, the freefall trainer and examiner for SBT-20. “While we are in the facility, we have the ability to provide instant feedback, so the jumpers can improve their technique with minimal effort.

Initially, the SWCCs are briefed on hand signals in the facility, parachute components and the different goals they will have to accomplish in order to complete their training. Once at the wind tunnel, each SWCC must demonstrate the ability to stabilize his body without wearing a parachute or

gear. Once that objective is met, they can then move on to training with their equipment.

SBT-20 Air Operations conducts this training quarterly due to the influx of unqualified junior personnel. The training class usually consists of no more than 30 SWCCs from the team to ensure adequate guidance and training. This is especially important in areas such as emergency procedures and the addition of a combat load. This extra time is allotted to boost their confidence in their equipment and emergency procedures in order to reduce mishaps and ensure mission completion.

“I feel one hundred percent confident in my ability to overcome any obstacle I will be faced with at freefall school,” said Special Warfare Boat Operator 2nd Class Nicholas Kowalski, a student of the course. “This training is absolutely beneficial in the educating and reducing nervousness of anyone who is even thinking about becoming freefall qualified.”

Upon completion of the training, the members of SBT-20 will report back to their command and receive orders to attend the military freefall school.

Vice president visits SEALs

*By Petty Officer 2nd Class Dominique Lasco
NSW Public Affairs*

Vice President Joe Biden recently visited with Sailors at Naval Special Warfare Center while touring San Diego area naval bases.

During his first visit to NSWC since being elected, Biden took time to observe Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL candidates in training and spoke with members of a SEAL team who recently returned from deployment in Iraq.

“I never cease to be positively amazed at what you guys do,” said Biden to more than 200 BUD/S candidates in attendance.

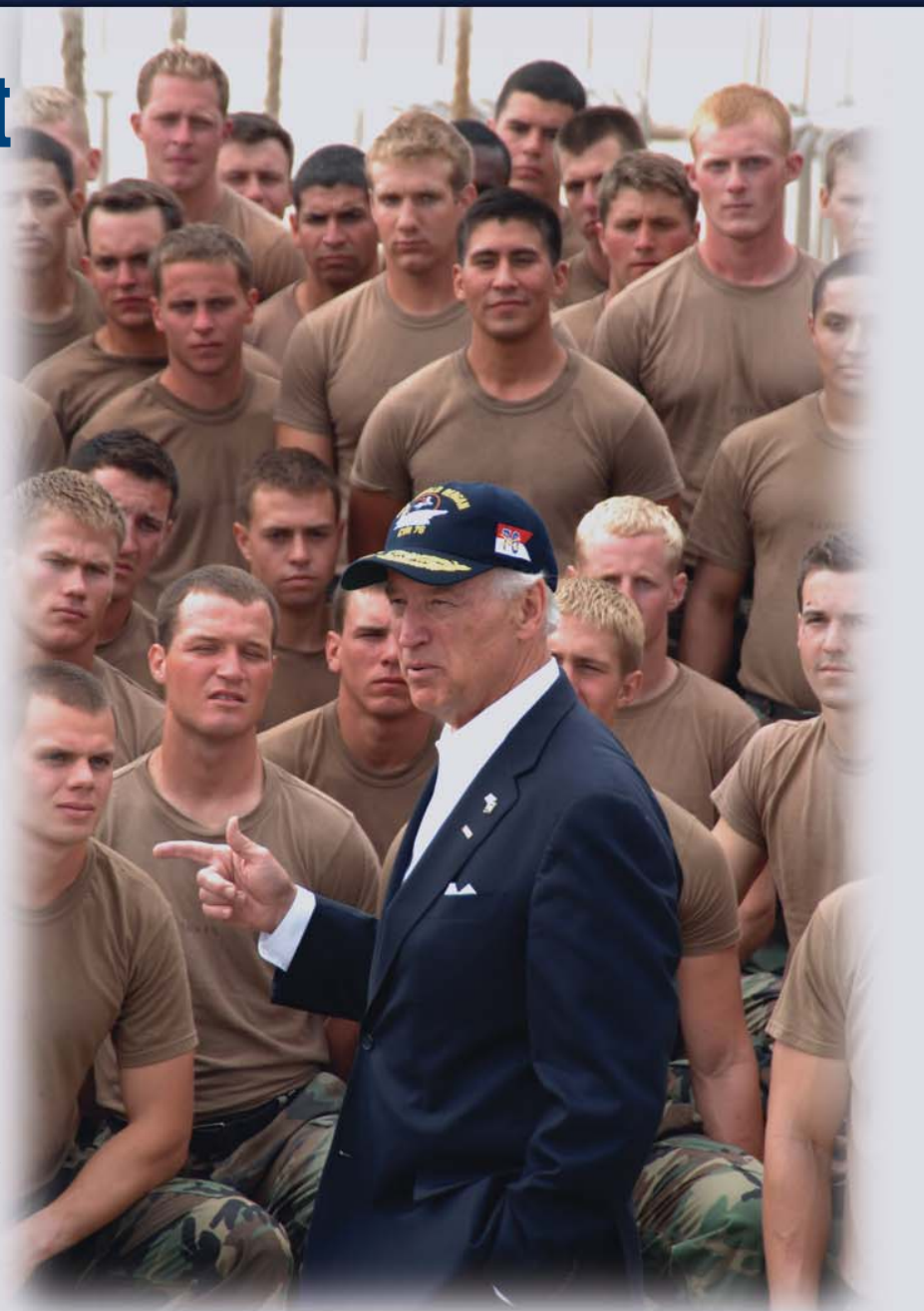
“Don’t quit, because we need you. These wars are not your father’s wars. The wars of the 21st century are going to be wars based on chaos ... it’s you guys we are looking to. It’s you guys that put yourselves on the line in ways no one else does, and we need you badly.”

While speaking to SEAL team members, he assured and made clear that the current administration and the government as a whole are appreciative and support what members of Special Operations Forces do.

“Thank you so much. Thank you so much for your honor, for your bravery, and thank you for your service to your country,” said Biden. “It’s what you do here and your training of these young men here that is important and makes a difference in what we are trying to accomplish.”

Adm. Edward Winters III, commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, presented Biden with a rosewood paddle inlaid with the SEAL and SWCC warfare pins to commemorate the event.

The stop was among many for Biden and his wife,



Vice President Joe Biden talks with Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL candidates on the beach at Naval Special Warfare Center during his visit to San Diego. BUD/S candidates must complete three phases of training and qualify in advanced training during a yearlong program to become Navy SEALs. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Dominique Lasco.

Jill, who were in the San Diego area visiting Sailors and their families. Jill Biden met with local military spouses and community volunteer groups to discuss issues facing military families.



DYNAMIC

*By Lance Cpl. Stephen Benson
MARSOC Public Affairs*


The ongoing Overseas Contingency Operations are part of an ongoing and ever-changing battle that demands its combatants fight from the streets of cities to the deserts and farmlands of the countryside. In these battles, U.S. forces must be equipped with a range of skills that are adaptable and effective in all the places they may find the enemy. To that end, Marines and Sailors with the 2d Marine Special

Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, conducted marksmanship training in April at the Washoe County Regional Shooting Facility in Reno, Nev., in preparation for the direct action package.

MSOB members who participated in the exercise were in Nevada as part of their Marine Special Operations Companies' Deployment for Training. The DFT is a team-building exercise designed to ensure the MSOC grows together and to ensure proficiency in the basics.

Marksmanship training incorporates different shooting scenarios that put Marines and Sailors in situations that challenge their ability to successfully employ their weapons against the enemy. An important portion of the package is the instruction and shooting that takes place on the flat range on silhouette targets. In this portion, participants learn new shooting positions and tactics that are applicable to the Special Operations missions they undertake.

On the flat range, most often used by local law enforcement and other government agencies, Operators loaded their .45-caliber and M9 9 mm pistols, as well as their M4 rifles, before heading to the firing line. On the firing line, Marines who had previously served as close-quarters battle instructors provided instruction, which took the shooters through timed shooting drills, multiple firing positions, speed and tactical reloads and transition drills from their primary to secondary weapon



Marines and Sailors with a company from 2d Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, sight in on their targets as they conduct shooting drills as part of their Dynamic Assault package at the Washoe County Regional Shooting Facility Reno, Nev. MARSOC photo.

ASSAULT



while engaging multiple targets.

The majority of the Marines and Sailors within the MSOC have deployed to combat before. The experience they bring to these packages adds to the validity the training. At the conclusion of the first day of shooting, the instructors were satisfied with the performance of the participants. They participants left the range with a better understanding of their weapon systems and how to employ them to their maximum effectiveness when it counts the most.

(Left) A bullet casing ejects from an M9 pistol after a Marine with a company from 2d Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, fires at his target. The Marines and Sailors conducted shooting drills as part of their Dynamic Assault package at the Washoe County Regional Shooting Facility, Reno, Nev. (Below) A Marine with a company from 2d Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, fires on his target while conducting shooting drills. MARSOC photos.





MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

MARSOC Marines graduate first Individual Training Course

*By Cpl. Richard Blumenstein
MARSOC Public Affairs*

Fifty Marines graduated from the first ever U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, Individual Training Course and earned the title Marine Special Operator during a graduation ceremony April 22 at Stone Bay at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The ceremony marked a historic event for the Marine Corps and the Special Operations community, as these Marines will circulate into MARSOC and set a precedent for future generations of Marine Operators and their role in Special Operations.

ITC is designed to prepare Marines to conduct Special Operations missions in support of Overseas Contingency Operations. Marines attend the course after they pass the Assessment and Selection process.

MARSOC began developing the course shortly after the Marine Corps officially joined the ranks of U.S. Special Operations Command Feb. 24, 2006. The course follows guidelines set after the Secretary of Defense approved a joint recommendation by USSOCOM and the Marine Corps in November of 2005 to create a Marine Special Operations Command as a component of USSOCOM, according to U.S. Department of Defense news releases.

“The secretary of defense said, ‘I want a Special Operations command in the United States that represents all four of my services, not just three of them. I want a dedicated Marine Corps Special Operations command with a pipeline that produces Marine Special Operators that becomes a fully fledged member of U.S. Special Operations Command and is a component of that joint command,’” said Maj. Gen. Mastin Robeson, the commander of MARSOC.

The graduation of the first ITC class marks the coming to fruition of years of labor in making the idea of a Marine Special Operations Force a reality, according to Col. Joseph Marelo, commander of Marine Special Operations School, MARSOC, who is responsible for conducting the ITC.

“The result is a demanding Special Operations course that not only develops the tangible Special Operations skills, but also seeks to develop the values, character and mindset of



Maj. Gen. Mastin Robeson, the commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, reflects on the past three years of MARSOC and its accomplishments during the graduation ceremony of the first ever MARSOC Individual Training Course at Stone Bay, Camp Lejeune, N.C. MARSOC photo.

a Marine Special Operator,” Marelo said.

The course began Oct. 6, 2008, and took nearly seven months to complete. The course curriculum centers on all the skills necessary to develop a Marine Special Operator, which include direct action, close-quarters battle, special reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, fire support, tactical casualty care, irregular warfare, survival evasion resistance and escape, and infantry weapons and tactics, according to Marelo.

Although MARSOC is now open to all military occupational specialties, all the Marines graduating from this first ITC have a background in Special Operations. Each Marine came from within the ranks of MARSOC, and many have already conducted Special Operations missions with the command.

“That was by design,” Robeson said, explaining the class members’ experience. “Because we wanted to get the first course right, and we needed their expertise to help us get that right and make adjustments before we go into the next one.”

According to Marelo, the input of the ITC instructors and newly graduated Marines will be used to refine the course and further improve the abilities of future Special Operators.

“You are a new breed of Marine,” Robeson said. “You are a historic breed of Marine, and it’s a historic chapter for the U.S. Special Operations Command and for our nation.”

Jump ops bring MARSOC down to earth

*By Lance Cpl. Stephen Benson,
MARSOC Public Affairs*

In a continuing effort to refine and hone the skills of the Marines and Sailors of a Marine Special Operations Company within U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, members of 2d Marine Special Operations Battalion conducted static line and military freefall parachute operations in Nevada.

Marines and Sailors arrived in Nevada to conduct their Deployment for Training. For one Marine Special Operations team, the first days of training were devoted to sharpening their military freefall insertion capabilities. The members of the military freefall team gathered on the flight line early the first morning to prepare their Multi-Mission Parachute Systems for the jump. The Operators were joined by Marines from 2d MSOB's paraloft who were there to assist the company in maintaining safety standards, as well as to provide additional subject matter expertise to the event.

The exercise included both resupply drops and military freefall jumps. The resupply drops were conducted with static line systems and jumpers. Static line jumps are performed at lower altitudes than freefall and were incorporated for aircrew training and to validate the MSOC's airborne resupply capability. The biggest difference between the two is the altitude at which the bundles or jumpers exit the aircraft. In static line jumps, the parachute deploys immediately after exiting. In freefall jumps, the Operators will fall for several thousand feet before deploying their parachute.

The ability to insert Marines and Sailors via airborne methods provides companies within MARSOC an important asset to utilize when they deploy to combat. MARSOC deploys Marines and Sailors to every climate and place, so Operators within the company must possess a wide range of skills to ensure success wherever they may operate.

This training has the added benefit of being conducted in the mountainous and desert areas of Nevada, where the terrain is similar to places like Afghanistan in which the MSOC could operate in the future.

After multiple jumps at varying heights and times of day, the airborne portion of training during the DFT concluded. The Marines and Sailors of the company have

laid the foundation for the establishment of a credible military freefall capability, and members of the company left with an improved understanding of how a particular terrain and climate can be successfully managed when conducting airborne operations.



A Marine with a company from 2d Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, jumps out into the sky as the rest of his team wait to jump in line behind him. Marines and Sailors conducted jump operations to refine their capability at Reno/Stead Airport, Reno, Nev.



MSOC takes on high-angle marksmanship, demolition

By Lance Cpl. Stephen Benson
MARSOC Public Affairs

When most Marines think of shooting weapons on the range, their minds go to images of a long expanse of flat land and shooting at targets directly ahead of them. In combat, as many Marines and Sailors are aware, the enemy can appear from anywhere - a rooftop, on top of a ridge or from the bottom of a valley. With this in mind, members of a Marine Special Operations Company with 2d Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, recently took their weapons and Ground Mobility Vehicles high atop Rocket Mountain in Hawthorne, Nev., to conduct high-angle shooting drills and demolition training.

Teams gathered in the morning preparing their vehicles and packing their long-range weaponry for the trip to the top of Rocket Mountain. Once they reached the top, the team members assembled by the edge of a cliff face, looking down on a wide valley many hundreds of yards below. In the valley below, other members of the team had set up steel-plated sniper targets. For the crew-served weapons mounted onto their vehicles, larger targets were available, such as broken down shacks, barrels and large metal containers no longer in use.

Operators improved their ability to employ weapons from high angles, becoming familiar with small differences in how their weapons operate when they are tilted downward, such as how rounds and links eject from their weapons, maneuvering their weapons to clear stray

bullet casings and fixing malfunctions.

Snipers learned the changes they must make in shooting positions and sight adjustments when engaging targets thousands of meters away and far beneath their position.

Before nightfall, the team departed Rocket Mountain to conduct demolition training on a separate range. Marines and Sailors used TNT and C4 explosives in a variety of ways to destroy targets. Explosives require a lot of care and knowledge in order to be effective weapons against the enemy while maintaining safety for the user.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Marines are assigned to each team within the MSOC and are able to assist their team members in this regard. After destroying targets effectively during the day, Marines later made their way back up Rocket Mountain to continue their high-angle shooting at night.

The night shooting portion allowed teams to practice using night vision. This included the use of spotlights mounted to their crew-served weapons, tracer rounds, night vision goggles and laser sights mounted on their weapons.

All the teams were able to sharpen their skills during their high-angle shoots and demolition training, which was yet another important part of their training. Marines and Sailors in the MSOC can now take the lessons learned and build upon them during their next training event and eventually to the battlefield.

(Main photo) A Marine from a Marine Special Operations Company with the 2d Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, fires his M107 Long Application Scoped Rifle at targets in the valley below him. Marines and Sailors conducted high-angle shooting at the top of Rocket Mountain, Hawthorne, Nev. Courtesy photo.



Fire and smoke fly into the air after an explosive created by a Marine from a Marine Special Operations Company with the 2d Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, detonates on its target. Marines and Sailors conducted demolition training at Hawthorne, Nev. Courtesy photo.





AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Combat Controller receives two Bronze Stars for valor

*By Capt. Amy Cooper
AFSOC Public Affairs*

A Combat Controller, who is now charged with helping fill the Special Tactics ranks, was presented with two Bronze Stars with valor during a ceremony held recently at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

Master Sgt. Ken Huhman, a Special Tactics recruiter in San Antonio, received the medals for his actions during a 2007 deployment to Afghanistan while assigned to the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

“His contribution to the Special Tactics teams, and all our Combat Controllers who are embedded, is just immeasurable,” said Brig. Gen. A.J. Stewart, Air Force Recruiting Service commander, after he presented the medals to Huhman. “What they are able to do, and under fire in the mountains of Afghanistan, is amazing.”

During his deployment, Huhman was attached to an Army Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha, or ODA. The Special Operations team conducted multiple combat reconnaissance patrols throughout Afghanistan’s volatile Kandahar province.

This was Huhman’s second deployment to the country. The Combat Controller, who was a force reconnaissance Marine before joining the Air Force in 1996, also has a tour in Iraq to his credit.

“The main reason I became a Combat Controller was for the mission opportunities,” Huhman said.

Two such “mission opportunities” during this



Master Sgt. Kenneth Huhman deployed to Afghanistan in 2007. Huhman, a Combat Controller assigned to 23rd Special Tactics Squadron, received two Bronze Stars with valor during a ceremony held recently at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Air Force photo.

deployment landed Huhman the medals.

One took place Sept. 5 and 6, 2007, while his team was patrolling a Taliban-controlled area of the province searching for stolen Afghan National Police vehicles.

When the team reached the target, they “disturbed a hornet’s nest,” Huhman said.

They were attacked by small-arms and machine-gun fire and rocket-propelled grenades from two directions. The team split up to maneuver around the enemy threat, with Huhman’s team taking cover behind a mud wall.

Using his joint terminal attack control skills, the

Combat Controller directed a flight of F-15E Strike Eagles to drop two 500-pound bombs 50 meters from his position. The “danger close” drops successfully eliminated enemy fighters embedded on a hilltop.

Huhman, repeatedly exposing himself to enemy fire, continued to call in close-air support for the team and coordinated a route allowing them to escape from the valley. In total, he directed the release of more than 8,000 pounds of ordnance and controlled six different attack and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft during the 26-hour ordeal.

Despite the barrage of gunfire and length of the battle, the combat veteran maintained his composure and killed 41 enemy fighters, all without losing a single American life.

“With combat control and all the responsibilities you have, all you have time to do is think about what happens next,” Huhman said. “You’re just worried about making sure your team is safe and thinking about what you do next to keep them safe.”

This approach enabled Huhman to successfully employ close-air support even after his GPS broke in the middle of the battle, forcing him to revert to other, less technological techniques.

About two months later, Huhman earned another Bronze Star with valor for a second firefight with Taliban militants.

In November 2007, the Special Operations team was conducting reconnaissance on a known enemy strongpoint. Using ISR assets, Huhman was able to identify seven Taliban fighters setting up a mortar position. He called for air support and took out the enemy before they could attack Coalition forces.

A while later, the convoy again found themselves in a heated firefight as they moved through the terrain. Huhman was temporarily blinded when a round impacted near his position.

However, he wasn’t concerned about his own life.

“At the time I was just worried about the team,” Huhman said. “Once I couldn’t see, I used the aircraft as my eyes to make sure they saw the convoy. I let them

know I didn’t have visual and that I had to rely on them.”

The Combat Controller regained his site just in time to see a Taliban fighter aiming his RPG launcher at the convoy.

“He popped out of a doorway and dialed in on the vehicle,” Huhman said.

Huhman fired off one 84 mm rifle shot at the building before re-engaging with his M-4 rifle.

He directed gun runs from support aircraft as the team pushed through the barrage of enemy fire toward their objective. Once there, Huhman continued to identify and destroy enemy fighting positions throughout the village. In total, he spent 11 hours directing close-air support, completely emptying the ammunition on two F/A-18 Hornets and one AC-130 gunship.

Later that night, the team used intelligence assets to identify a meeting of high-level Taliban leaders in a nearby cave. Huhman called in another precision airstrike that launched two 500-pound bombs and one Hellfire missile, eliminating the enemy.

“After we took out those guys, nothing happened in that area for six months,” Huhman said.

“They’re life savers,” Stewart said of Combat Controllers such as Huhman. “Had it not been for the air support he was able to call in, then perhaps things (would have turned) out differently in those situations.”

But the quiet professional is not quick to tout his success on the battlefield.

“I was just one of the many guys doing his job,” he said. “I was in the right place at the right time. Any controller in that position would have done the same things.”

However, Huhman says he is willing to tell potential combat control recruits his story. He is one of 12 Special Tactics Airmen from the Air Force Special Operations Training Center embedded with recruiting units throughout the country.

According to one of Huhman’s former teammates, those young men should listen up.

“He’s definitely walked the walk,” said Capt. Steve Cooper, who was Huhman’s team leader at the 23rd STS. “Recruits are going to listen to what he has to say.”





AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Pacific Air Commandos honor those 'with the guts to try'

By Tech. Sgt. Aaron Cram
353rd Special Operations Group

Members of the 353rd Special Operations Group at Kadena Air Base, Japan, gathered recently for a combat dining out to celebrate and remember the servicemembers who conducted Operation Eagle Claw 29 years ago.

Operation Eagle Claw was an aborted rescue mission into Iran to recover more than 50 American hostages captured after a group of Islamist students took over the U.S. Embassy in Tehran Nov. 4, 1979. The mission resulted in the crash of two aircraft and the deaths of eight American servicemembers at a remote site deep in Iranian territory known as Desert One.

"This combat dining out is a way to honor all of the servicemembers who participated in Operation Eagle

Claw," said Col. David Mullins, the 353rd SOG commander. "We pay respect to the eight fallen comrades and commemorate the efforts and the tactics devised for this mission because without them many of today's missions would not be possible. These brave men laid the groundwork for the world of Special Operations as we know it today. It's a privilege for us to serve in the community they helped create."

Airmen and family members from the group dressed in their battle gear for the combat portion of the evening. During a "cease fire," people listened to retired Col. Thomas Beres, one of Eagle Claw's crewmembers and former 353rd SOG commander, share his experiences and lessons learned from the mission.

Beres stated at the time the embassy was captured, Special Operations was still considered unconventional



Members of the 353rd Special Operations Group and their family members raise their glasses to toast during a combat dining out at Kadena Air Base, Japan. The dining out commemorated Operation Eagle Claw, an aborted rescue mission April 24, 1980, into Iran to recover more than 50 American hostages captured after a group of Islamist students took over the American embassy in Tehran Nov. 4, 1979. The mission resulted in the crash of two aircraft and the deaths of eight American service members at a remote site deep in Iranian territory known as Desert One. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Aaron Cram.

warfare. There were limited crews in Special Operations squadrons, and some of the tactics the mission would call for didn't exist. The months leading up to Operation Eagle Claw saw crews rush to develop new tactics like refueling helicopters in remote locations and flying using night vision goggles in near blackout conditions. Crews were chosen based on their flexibility, not experience, he said.

After months of training and planning, a complex two-night mission was designed that had three MC-130Es, three EC-130s and eight RH-53s landing deep in Iranian territory at a dusty landing strip -- Desert One. The EC-130s would refuel the RH-53s so the helicopters could transport rescue forces further into Iran. The MC-130s would infiltrate Army forces closer to Tehran to capture and secure an airfield that would be used to exfiltrate the rescue crews and hostages once the RH-53s delivered them to the captured airfield. The mission did not go according to plan.

On April 24, 1980, three MC-130Es and three EC-130s landed at Desert One after taking off from an air base in Oman. Eight RH-53s departed the USS Nimitz. Two of the helicopters experienced maintenance issues and never made it to the landing site. Of the six that made it to Desert One, only five were still mission capable due to a hydraulic system failure. The mission required at least six RH-53s to continue.

With fuel running low on the C-130s, the call to abort the mission was made. Before the aircraft could take off, one of the RH-53s needed to be moved. As the helicopter moved, it kicked up dust. The pilot of the RH-53 became disoriented and turned into one of the C-130s. Fire engulfed the wreck. In all, five Air Force and three Marines were killed; several were injured.

"I saw a flash of light out of the corner of my eye," Beres said. "It took a moment to realize what happened."

The surviving personnel and C-130s departed Desert One for the air base at Oman. Upon their return, the C-130 crews found that a British contingent on the base had left them a gift: two cases of beer and a note that read, "to you all from us all for having the guts to try."

Over the last 29 years, Beres said he has heard many versions of the events that took place at Desert One. He said he does his best to share his story and lessons learned when he gets the chance. During the combat dining out, the retired navigator shared five main points with the people in attendance.

He said, "Special Operations is a frame of mind. Special Operations Forces say we can do it if this happens



Airman 1st Class Jonnathan Clay runs through the obstacle course to get to the grog bowl during a combat dining out commemorating Operation Eagle Claw. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Aaron Cram.

or this happens, not why they can't do the mission. It's a can-do attitude that makes these impossible missions possible.

"You can never 'what if' it enough. We would ask questions and be told not to worry about it because it wasn't in the plan. As we all know, not everything goes according to plan. When planning a mission, I suggest you 'what if' that mission to death.

"Let the people doing the task decide how it gets done. The best way to get a task done right is to let the people performing the task determine the best course of action to carry out their duties.

"People are more important than equipment. Make sure you have the right caliber people in the right place. If you don't, no piece of equipment can save the mission.

"Rank does have its privileges, but don't take it on a mission. Rank should be used to expedite the mission, not limit what a person can do. No matter what rank you are, a mission task is not beneath you."

Beres closed his speech by noting the strides Special Operations Forces have made since crews began pushing the envelope when they started training for what would become Operation Eagle Claw.

"I look back at some of things we did preparing for the mission and think they were pretty dangerous," he said. "We were doing things that were unheard of or thought to be impossible. Today, you do these tasks and other extraordinary things thought to be impossible and make them look routine. That amazes people like me. We respect you for it. We're kind of in awe and know the best is yet to come."



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS

Dawn of the Devils

By Christian Fearer
USSOCOM History Office

Among the first Special Operations units was a joint U.S.-Canadian effort whose mission was to interdict and harass German forces during World War II. It was one of the first land-based units to use unconventional weapons and tactics during that war and was tasked to take on the enemy in some of the harshest terrain in Europe.

The unit's genesis came when Gen. George Marshall visited London in the spring of 1942 and was introduced to Geoffrey Pyke, a brilliant and eccentric member of Vice Adm. Lord Louis Mountbatten's civilian brain trust. Mountbatten, the chief of the newly organized Commando Forces, had been recently briefed by Pyke on an ambitious operation he called Project Plough designed to distract German forces occupying Norway, Romania and the Italian Alps by inserting Allied commandos trained in winter warfare.

The concept of Project Plough was thoroughly scrutinized by the U.S. War Department. Lt. Col. Robert Frederick, a staff officer, argued the plan should be abandoned or redirected principally because of the force's organization and means of extraction, or lack thereof. Despite his reservations and in a bit of irony, Frederick was promoted to colonel and given the task to assemble men for the proposed force he would find himself leading.

Frederick, Mountbatten and Pyke traveled to Canada in hopes of securing a commitment of men necessary to create a combined U.S.-Canadian force. On July 9, 1942, the 1st Special Service Force, organized into three small regiments and a service battalion, was activated. The Canadians provided nearly 700 officers and enlisted men for the project – all of whom were carefully scrutinized. The American command recruited from volunteers throughout the Army, giving preference to those with experience working in rugged outdoor environments.

Given their unique mission of operating in cold, alpine terrain, the Force received specialized equipment, including skis, parkas and weapons such as the M1941 Johnson machine gun and V-42 Stiletto combat knife.

Pyke's plan had foreseen forces that would serve as saboteurs who disrupted critical infrastructure, including railways, electrical supplies and the enemy's logistical operations.

Beginning at Fort William Henry Harrison in Montana in July 1942, the Force extensively trained in hand-to-hand

combat, demolition, parachuting, rock climbing, amphibious warfare, mountain warfare and ski warfare. The following spring, they relocated to Fort Ethan Allen in Vermont in anticipation of an eventual insertion into Norway, a mission that wound up being canceled. In July 1943, the Force was sent to the Aleutian Islands with the mission to retake Kiska from the Japanese. When they discovered the Japanese had already abandoned the island, Frederick's men were ordered back to Vermont.

By the end of October, the 1st SSF was on its way to the Mediterranean at the behest of Lt. Gen. Mark Clark, who was preparing for the coming Italian campaign. Arriving November 19, the Force was sent to the front, where they confronted the Germans defending especially rugged mountain positions at Monte la Difensa and Monte la Remetanea.

On the night of December 3, members of the Force spearheading the assault began climbing the mountainsides and scaled the cliffs toward their objectives. Over the next three days, the men of the 1st SSF pried the Germans loose from their stronghold on the mountain passes and earned a reputation for taking objectives that others could not.

The 1st SSF was relocated to Anzio as a replacement force with a mission to hold and raid from the Allies' right flank on the Mussolini Canal. Although they had been battered in the mountains, the Force was not timid and conducted aggressive patrols against nearby German positions. Germans began referring to the marauding Force as the Devil's Brigade or, because the raiders blackened their faces, the Black Devils. Capitalizing on the Germans' fear, members of the 1st SSF ordered a supply of stickers bearing the brigade insignia and a statement in German that read, "The worst is yet to come." Upon finding a dead enemy soldier, they would place the sticker on the dead man's helmet and continue on.

The enemy feared the Devils as much as many within the Allies admired them. A Canadian writer wrote of the Force: "These soldiers are probably the toughest, all-around fighting men ever created. When a tough job comes up, the 'Black Devils' take to it like a duck to water."

The 1st SSF fought for more than three months without relief. Finally, on June 4, members of the Force entered Rome, securing the bridges, and continued in pursuit of the retreating enemy. By mid-August, the 1st SSF landed in southern France during Operation DRAGOON and was moved to the French-Italian border, where it assumed defensive positions the following month. On Dec. 5, 1944, the 1st SSF was disbanded.

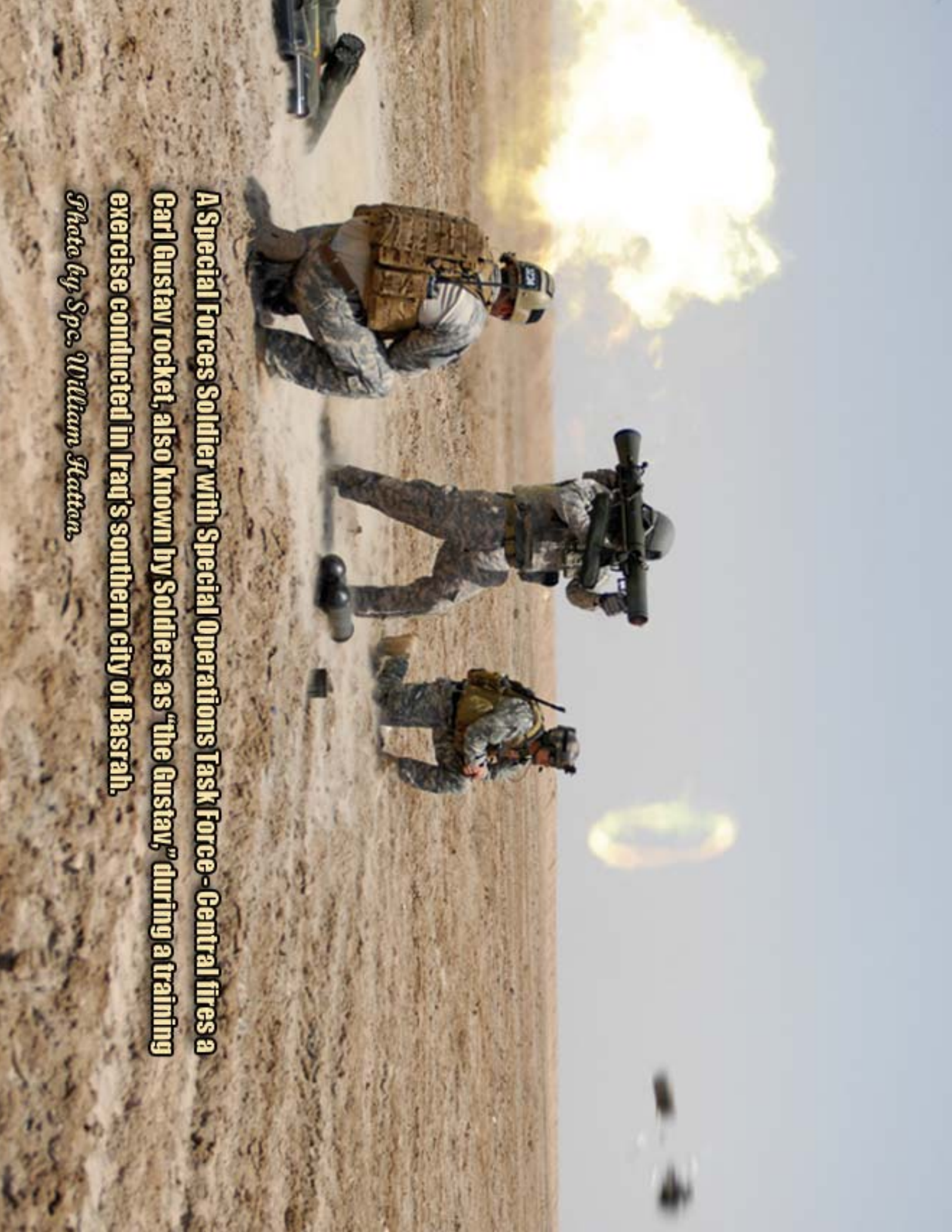
**SPECIAL OPERATORS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES
SERVING IN OPERATIONS ENDURING FREEDOM,
IRAQI FREEDOM AND
OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS
WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN**



**Army Cpl. Ryan McGhee
75th Ranger Regiment**



**Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Tyler Trahan
Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit - 12
* Attached to a SEAL team**



A Special Forces Soldier with Special Operations Task Force - Central fires a Carl Gustav rocket, also known by Soldiers as "the Gustav," during a training exercise conducted in Iraq's southern city of Basrah.

Photo by Spc. William Hattan.